

Consumer Product Safety Alert

FROM THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

Children Can Strangle in Window Covering Cords

- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Window Covering Safety Council are joining with major manufacturers, importers, and retailers across the United States to warn parents and caregivers that young children can become entangled and strangle in pull cords- for window coverings. CPSC is aware of at least 194 deaths since 1981. With the continuing number of strangulation deaths, CPSC is reissuing this warning which was first issued in 1985.
- Window covering cords are one of the products most frequently associated with strangulation of children under five. The younger victims, usually between 10 to 15 months of age, typically are in cribs which have been placed near window covering pull cords. Although a few older children, usually from two to four years old, find cords hanging near the floor, most of these victims become entangled in cords while climbing on furniture to look out the window. Entanglement and strangulation can occur when a child is alone in a room for only a short time.
- The CPSC and the Window Covering Safety Council urge parents to eliminate the loop in two-corded horizontal blinds, and pleated and cellular shades by using any of the following technical fixes:

Horizontal Blinds

- Cut the cord above the tassel, remove the equalizer buckle, and add a separate tassel at the end of each cord, or
- Cut the cord above the tassel, remove the equalizer buckle, and add a breakaway tassel which will separate if a child becomes entangled in the loop.

Pleated or Cellular Shades

- Leave the cord stop near the headrail in place. Cut the cord above the tassel and add a separate tassel at the end of each cord. Warning: When shades are raised, a loop will appear above the cord stop. Keep cord out of the reach of children.

